

TOWN OF UNDERHILL
Energy Committee Minutes - Final
6:30 P.M. Wednesday, May 9, 2018

Meeting called to order 6:30 p.m.

Quorum established Underhill Energy Committee (UEC) members in attendance: Peter Bennett (PB), Jerry Adams (JA), Ruth Julianelle (RJ), Michael Oman (MO), Steve Webster (SW), and Nicole Bourassa (NB)

Public Comments – none

Reviewed/Approval of Minutes from April 11, 2018

So moved by MO; approved unanimously.

Solar Project Options

NB reviewed new net metering rules – main effect is reduction of preferred site solar premium by 1 cent per kwh starting July 1, 2018

Meeting with Underhill Conservation Commission (UCC)

Members present: Karen McKnight and Pat Lamphere

Discussed the four reasons why UCC voted against approval of landfill site

1. Wildlife habitat disturbance – based on input from County Forester
2. The integrity of the landfill - UEC questions whether there is reason to be concerned
3. The belief that the solar array would further degrade the area – this an aesthetic issue and tends to be based on individual value judgments.
4. The installation of the solar array would set a precedent – UEC feels this concern carries the most weight.

PB noted that because go-ahead would require a town vote in the annual meeting (per VT state law) consideration of landfill is on hold but we would like to continue discussing issues.

UCC is in favor of Beartown gravel pit site. Although this is not Conserved land, MO emphasized that UEC welcomes input from the UCC on all renewable energy siting.

Motion was made by SW to have one or more joint meetings to discuss energy issues, time and place to be determined. Passed unanimously.

PB, with agreement of UEC, agreed to ask the Planning Commission (PC) how PC task force might accept input from UCC on energy siting issues.

SW agreed to act as liaison between UEC and UCC.

Discussion of current status of Gravel Pit solar

PB reported that 5/8 SB meeting with UEC was postponed

SW gave report on **Site Visits:**

- **4/19/2018:** Nate Sullivan reviewed current use of the gravel pit by the Town Highway Department and identified boundary lines. In attendance: Pat Sabalis, Peter Bennett, Ruth Julianelle, and Steve Webster
- **4/27/2018:** Sam Carlson, Green Lantern Group, visited the site and agreed that the site could potentially host a 150 kW array, pending further exploration. In attendance: Peter Bennett and Steve Webster
- **5/3/2018:** Kevin Davis, Norwich Solar Technologies, visited the site and agreed that the site could potentially host a 150 kW array, pending further exploration. In attendance: Peter Bennett, Ruth Julianelle, and Steve Webster

Discussed Next Steps:

- Revisit the site with Nate Sullivan and stake off the areas the Highway Department needs to remain open and accessible (e.g., the road to the “upper level,” a “turnaround” on the upper level, and access to the debris pile)
- Get outline of proposals from GLG and Norwich
 - Include timelines, costs, liability issues, CPG process, etc.
 - Confirm that Peck is not interested
- Identify and answer any remaining questions from the Selectboard
- Confirm that the gravel pit is not subject to any Act 250 limitations
- Verify the boundaries and confirm which trees can be cut, if any
- Consider whether any plantings are needed to screen the site from view
- Revisit the site with possible developers, if desired
- Solicit proposals from the developers
- Have the Town’s lawyer review the proposals
- Select a developer
- Develop the PV system (which includes a laundry list of tasks to be performed by the developer such as determining whether the system can be mounted on posts, analyzing the soil stability, getting approval for a connection to the power line from GMP, etc.)

UEC agreed that we need more vetting of both developers

Town energy plan

UEC members will act as advisers; first meeting to be scheduled

Other Business

PB reminded members to think of possible library purchases ideas

Committee Operations

Open meeting law review – PB will follow up with VLCT to ascertain whether a Google doc accessible to the public could be used for collecting committee info/ideas and not violate the Open Meeting Law

Year going forward: priorities – agreed to discuss in depth next meeting

Next regularly scheduled meeting – June 13, 2018

Motion to Adjourn Energy Committee Meeting by SW at 8:05 approved

Submitted by Peter Bennett